

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 HA-05 SAA-01 SSM-03
ARA-10 /092 W

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O P 251113Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8872
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4192

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION: JULY 25, 1300 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 4174 (DTG 24 1428Z JUL 78)

1. SUMMARY. HADATH WAS SHELLED FOR THE FOURTH DAY IN A ROW.
DESPITE A RELATIVE LULL AS OF 13:00 HOURS, THERE IS A GENERAL
EXPECTATION OF RENEWED FIGHTING. SAMIR SABBAGH TOLD REUTERS
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THAT NATIONAL MOVEMENT FIGHTERS SHOULD FIGHT THE CHRISTIAN
MILITIAS INSTEAD OF THE SYRIANS, BUT THAT DAMASCUS HAD RE-
JECTED THIS SUGGESTION. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS SAID THAT
THE HADATH FIGHTING WOULD NOT DELAY THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE
ARMY TO THE SOUTH, BUT DID NOT SET A DATE FOR SUCH DEPLOYMENT.
HOUSE SPEAKER AS'AD CALLED FOR THE IMMEDIATE DEPLOYMENT OF
THE ARMY TO THE SOUTH. GREEK ORTHODOX DEPUTY ALBERT MUKHAYBIR

ASKED THAT LEBANESE TROOPS BE DEPLOYED IN EAST BEIRUT TO STOP THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS FROM "TERRORIZING" THE CITIZENS. THE CHRISTIANS' UNITED COMMAND SAID THAT ANY MILITIAMAN COMMITTING UNLAWFUL ACTS WOULD BE DISMISSED. PIERRE GEMAYEL STATED THAT THE PRESENT MOOD IN LEBANON WAS REMINISCENT OF THAT WHICH PREVAILED IN 1975. YASIR ARAFA DEPARTED FOR CUBA. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION.

A. THERE WAS HEAVY SHELLING OF HADATH FROM 1800 TO 1900 HOURS ON JULY 24. AN ADF COMMUNIQUE SAID THE SHELLING WAS PROMPTED BY SNIPER FIRE, WHICH HAD "WOUNDED THREE ADF SOLDIERS" IN THE AFTERNOON. THE VOLUME OF FIRE DIED DOWN CONSIDERABLE AROUND 2400 HOURS.

B. ON 24 JULY SUPPLIES OF BREAD BEGAN TO RUN SHORT IN HADATH, AND THE PHALANGE "VOICE OF LEBANON" RADIO CHARGED THAT ADF ARTILLERY FIRE HAD HIT MAJOR BAKERIES THERE.

C. AS OF 1300 HOURS 25 JULY, THERE IS ONLY SCATTERED SMALL ARMS FIRE AND SHELLING, AND SOME CROSSING POINTS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BEIRUT REMAIN OPEN. DESPITE THE RELATIVE LULL, HOWEVER, THERE IS A GENERAL EXPECTATION OF RENEWED FIGHTING.

3. NATIONAL MOVEMENT REPORTEDLY OFFERS TO FIGHT CHRISTIANS.
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ON 24 JULY SAMIR SABBAGH, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE MURABITUN, TOLD A REUTERS CORRESPONDENT THAT LEFTIST MILITIAS FROM THE LEBANESE NATIONAL MOVEMENT SHOULD "REPLACE SYRIAN TROOPS FIGHTING RIGHT-WING MILITIAS IN BEIRUT." SABBAGH ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH SUGGESTIONS HAD BEEN REJECTED BY DAMASCUS. SABBAGH SAID THAT THE LEFTISTS WERE "PREPARED TO FIGHT TO THE LAST MAN" TO BLOCK "CHRISTIAN PLANS TO DOMINATE THE COUNTRY." SABBAGH CONCEDED THAT LEFTIST INVOLVEMENT IN THE FIGHTING COULD SET OFF ANOTHER CIVIL WAR, BUT SAID, "AT THE MOMENT, WE SEE NO OTHER SOLUTION."

4. ARMY MATTERS.

A. FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTER FUAD BOUTROS SAID ON 24 JULY THAT FIGHTING AROUND BEIRUT BETWEEN RIGHTIST MILITIAS AND SYRIAN UNITS OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE WOULD NOT DELAY THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY TO SOUTH LEBANON. BOUTROS ALSO SAID THAT HE COULD NOT NAME ANY SPECIFIC DATE FOR THE DEPLOYMENT, ACCORDING TO IKE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4192

B. BOUTROS FURTHER SAID THAT IN A MEETING ATTENDED BY
PRESIDENT ILYAS SARKIS, PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS, ARMY
COMMANDER GENERAL VICTOR KHOURY AND OTHER SENIOR ARMY OFFICERS,
AGREEMENT WAS REACHED ON SEVERAL "BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR THE
REORGANIZATION OF THE DEFENSE MINISTRY AND THE ARMY." THE
REORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY - TO MAKE IT MORE REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE LEBANESE POPULATION - HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MAJOR
DEMANDS OF LEBANESE MUSLIMS.

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5. HOUSE SPEAKER'S COMMENTS.

HOUSE SPEAKER KAMAL AS'AD, AFTER A MEETING WITH SHI'A MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ON 24 JULY, TOLD NEWSMEN THAT ANY FURTHER DELAY IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY TO THE SOUTH WOULD BE UNJUSTIFIED. AS'AD ADDED THAT THE DETERIORATION OF THE SECURITY SITUATION IN BEIRUT OR ELSEWHERE SHOULD NOT AFFECT THE DEPLOYMENT, BECAUSE "THE ARMY IS NOT THE FORCE WHICH IS CHARGED WITH THE TASK OF MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER NOW." AS'AD ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT IF THE ARMY WERE NOT DEPLOYED, UNIFIL TROOPS IN SOUTH LEBANON MIGHT LEAVE THE AREA.

6. MILITIAS "TERRORIZING" CITIZENS.

A. GREEK ORTHODOX DEPUTY ALBERT MUKHAYBIR ON 24 JULY CALLED ON PRESIDENT SARKIS TO DEPLOY LEBANESE ARMY TROOPS IN EAST BEIRUT, ESPECIALLY IN ASHRAFIYAH, "TO PUT AN END TO ILLEGAL ACTIONS BEING TAKEN BY GUNMEN IN THAT AREA." MUKHAYBIR SAID THAT THE POPULATION OF EAST BEIRUT WAS BEING "TERRORIZED" BY THE (CHRISTIAN) MILITIAMEN BUT WAS TOO FRIGHTENED TO COMPLAIN. (COMMENT: ON 22 JULY PHALANGE PARTY MILITIAMEN KIDNAPPED AND SEVERELY BEAT TWO LEBANESE POLICEMEN MANNING A ROADBLOCK, WHEN THE POLICE ARRESTED A GUNMAN WHO WAS CARRYING AN M-16 RIFLE AND HANDGRENADES. END COMMENT.)

B. THE UNITED COMMAND OF THE LEBANESE FRONT ANNOUNCED 24 JULY THAT "ANY MILITIAMAN WHO TAKES ILLEGAL ACTION WILL BE IMMEDIATELY DISMISSED BY HIS PARTY," ACCORDING TO IKE. THE PAPER SAID THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE AFTER A MEETING CALLED TO LOOK INTO INCREASING COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE BEHAVIOR OF MILITIAMEN IN EAST BEIRUT.

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7. GEMAYEL STATEMENT.

IN HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ON 24 JULY, PHALANGE PARTY LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL SAID THAT THE MOOD WHICH PREVAILED IN LEBANON IN 1975 WAS RE-EMERGING. GEMAYEL STATED, ACCORDING TO IKE, THAT "THE 'ISOLATIONIST' THEME IS RECURRING; LEFTIST PARTIES ARE REARING THEIR HEADS MORE THAN NECESSARY AND IMPOSING THEIR PRESENCE ON THE SILENT MAJORITY THROUGH TERROR AND CHAOS; RESIDENTIAL AREAS ARE BEING BOMBARDED . . . ALL THESE THINGS ARE REMINISCENT OF THE EARLY DAYS OF THE LEBANESE WAR."

8. ARAFAT LEAVES FOR CUBA.

PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN YASIR ARAFAT DEPARTED BEIRUT FOR A TRIP TO CUBA

ON 24 JULY, ACCORDING TO WAFA. THIS IS ARAFAT'S SECOND TRIP
TO CUBA AND IS "TO ATTEND THE WORLD YOUTH AND STUDENTS CON-
FERENCE," WAFA SAID. PARKER

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